

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Chesapeake Bay Program
Fiscal Year 2004 Request for Qualifications and Initial Proposals (RFIP) for
SUPPORT OF SMALL WATERSHED PROGRAMS
In the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

EPA.R3CBP-04-02
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 66.466.
Initial Announcement

U.S. EPA, Region III
Chesapeake Bay Program Office

February 26, 2004

Important Dates

February 26, 2004	Issuance of RFIP
April 22, 2004	Deadline for postmark of proposals 5:00 p.m. EST
April 26-May 14, 2004	Proposal review by review team
May 17, 2004	Recommendation submitted to Chesapeake Bay Program Office Director for decision
May 25, 2004	EPA notifies applicants of results.
June 8, 2004	Applicant submits federal grant application. Processing of grant typically takes 60 days.
August 10, 2004	Approximate date for grant award.

Executive Summary

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Chesapeake Bay Program Office is announcing a request for qualifications and initial proposals for support of the Small Watershed Grant Program for 2004-2009. This is a new announcement which has not previously been distributed.

The EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office plans to award one cooperative agreement to an intermediary organization that will manage the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grant Program. Through this RFIP, EPA seeks to identify an organization with a mission to support communities in their efforts to improve local watersheds within the Chesapeake Bay basin. EPA will develop a cooperative agreement with the selected organization to advertise for proposals, select subgrantees, oversee subgrants, monitor subgrants for completion of projects, and report on results and lessons learned. Funding for this program is appropriated each year by Congress. Since its start in 1998, the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program has awarded 292 grants totaling nearly \$9 million to communities throughout the Bay watershed.

EPA has awarded \$6,446,200 in the following amounts:

1999-2000: \$750,000
2000-2001: \$712,000
2001-2002: \$1,247,200
2002-2003: \$1,750,000
2003-2004: \$1,987,000

This RFIP will cover the performance of functions for the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) for a period up to and including five years from an expected start date of August, 2004. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond. An annual cooperative agreement will be negotiated with EPA and form the basis for year-to-year work planning and funding. Nothing in this RFIP binds EPA to using the successful applicant as the sole provider of CBP support for the period covered. EPA may elect to re-compete the entire project or specific tasks at an earlier date or add qualified organizations during this term to meet the needs of the Bay Program. Should additional funding become available to support these activities the EPA may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice or competition.

This Notice of Request for Qualifications and Initial Proposals to Support the Small Watershed Grant Program is funded under Section 117(d) (1) of the Clean Water Act and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 66.466. Past subawards have ranged from up to \$35,000 Minigrants to \$100,000 Legacy Grants given to local governments and non-profit organizations.

The EPA will consider all applications which are postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service, hand delivered, or includes official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service on or before 5:00 EST on **April 22, 2004**. All applications postmarked or hand-delivered after the due date will not be considered for funding. No proposals will be accepted by facsimile machine submission or electronic mail.

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Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

About the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP): The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. The Bay is a resource of extraordinary productivity, worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Accordingly, in 1983 the states of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the EPA signed an agreement that established the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. In 1987, the partners adopted a second agreement, which established an overall vision for the Bay.

Chesapeake 2000: On June 28, 2000, the Executive Council signed a new agreement, known as *Chesapeake 2000: A Watershed Partnership*. Chesapeake 2000 is one of the most aggressive and comprehensive watershed restoration plans ever developed. The agreement is the result of a comprehensive three-year stakeholder-driven process involving more than 300 scientists, resource managers, policymakers and citizens from all parts of the Bay watershed. The new agreement consolidated prior commitments and established new goals and deadlines for protecting and restoring the Bay's living resources, water quality, and vital habitats, promoting sound land use, and engaging communities beyond 2000.

About the Small Watershed Grants Program (SWG): The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program promotes community-based efforts to develop conservation strategies to protect and restore the diverse natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. The program provides subgrants to local governments and non-profit organizations working to improve the condition of their local watershed while building citizen-based resource stewardship. Since 1999, the Small Watershed Grants Program has been administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Chesapeake Bay Program. Additional funding for the program has been provided by NOAA Fisheries, USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Office of Surface Mining, and other sponsors.

This cooperative agreement will be awarded under the Clean Water Act, Section 117(d)(1) and will be subject to EPA's General Grant Regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 For Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations and 40 CFR Part 31 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to States and Local Governments.

The recipient of this cooperative agreement will:

1. administer the Small Watershed Grants Program, including issuing the RFIP, establishing guidelines for the program, and coordinating the review and selection of the grantees with various federal and state partners;
2. present workshops in at least six geographic locations to advertise the program and assist potential applicants;
3. measure environmental results and successes of the various watershed management approaches and compile this data and information and communicate it to the CBP and its partners;
4. disperse monies to subawardees in a timely manner; and
5. conduct outreach programs for the SWG program, including a yearly event to announce the winners and other programs to promote the successes of the SWG program.

The recipient of this cooperative agreement will issue subgrants under the SWG in accordance with Section 117 (g)2(B) of the Clean Water Act which provides technical assistance and assistance grants to implement:

1. cooperative tributary basin strategies that address the water quality and living resource needs in the CB ecosystem and;
2. locally based protection and restoration programs or projects within a watershed that complement the tributary basin strategies, including the creation, restoration, protection, or enhancement of habitat associated with the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

Examples of activities include:

- Support communities in developing and implementing watershed management plans;
- Encourage innovative, locally-based programs or projects that improve water quality and restore important habitats within the Chesapeake Bay basin;
- Develop the capacity of local governments, citizens groups, and other organizations to promote community based stewardship and enhance local watershed management;
- Encourage environmentally sensitive development, land conservation, and sound land use planning;
- Promote a greater understanding of the Chesapeake Bay and the interrelationship between the health of the Bay and the condition of local watersheds; and
- Strengthen the link between communities and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

There are two types grants offered in the Small Watershed Grants Program. The small grants range in size from \$5,000 to \$50,000, with the average grant award between \$25,000 and \$35,000. There is also the Community Legacy Grant Program which provide up to \$100,000 in funding. The Legacy grants are intended to encourage partnerships that will create a conservation legacy in communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and are awarded to innovative projects that either restore vital fish and wildlife habitats, develop locally-supported watershed management plans, or promote environmentally-sensitive development.

The request for proposals for the 2004 Small Watershed Grant Program and guidelines for proposals is posted at www.nfwf.org/chesapeake/index.htm.

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program, currently administered by NFWF, has already issued a request for proposals from eligible organizations for 2004. These proposals were due on February 9, 2004. NFWF will screen the submitted proposals and send eligible proposals to the review teams. Final selection of the 2004 grantees will not be made until a grantee has been selected based on this RFIP.

Obtaining Additional Information: For additional background information on the Small Watershed Grants Program and the types of projects that have been funded since 2000, see the Chesapeake Bay Program website located at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net> or call 215-814-5421 to receive information by mail.

Section II: Award Information

Funding Amount: Notice of Request for Qualifications and Initial Proposals to support the Small Watershed Grants Program in the Chesapeake Bay watershed will be funded under CFDA 66.466 – Chesapeake Bay Program. Each year, Congress allocates direct funding for the Small Watershed Grant Program. This year Congress has allocated \$2,000,000.

Award Type: The EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office plans to award one cooperative agreement for approximately \$2,000,000. The Agency has decided on a cooperative agreement because of the substantial federal involvement in the review of the proposals and the substantial coordination needed between the states and other federal partners. EPA will also serve as an advisor to the grant recipient.

Expected Project Period: Fiscal Year 2004 federal funding will be available for this project. No commitment of funding can be made for future fiscal years. This RFIP will cover the performance of functions for the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) for a project period up to and including five years from an expected start date of August, 2004. The budget period for this cooperative agreement is one years. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond. An annual cooperative agreement will be negotiated with EPA and form the basis for year-to-year work planning and funding. Nothing in this RFIP binds EPA to using the successful applicant as the sole provider of CBP support for the period concerned. EPA may elect to re-compete the entire project or specific tasks at an earlier date or add qualified organizations during this term to meet the needs of the Bay Program. Should additional funding become available to support these activities the EPA may award additional cooperative agreements based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice or competition.

Rejections: EPA reserves the right to reject all initial proposals and make no awards.

Section III: Eligibility Information

Who Can Apply? Any nonprofit organization, state, local, interstate agency, college or university is eligible to submit a proposal in response to this RFIP.

Who Is Not Eligible? Funding for this project comes from EPA. Therefore, EPA employees are not eligible to submit a proposal in response to this solicitation or aid in the preparation of a proposal by conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals. EPA employees may provide information on program goals, funding priorities, the procedure to submit a proposal, and the completion of proposal forms.

Cost Share Requirements: As stated in the Clean Water Act Section 117 (d)(2)(B) and if submitting a proposal for a cooperative agreement, your organization will be required to provide a minimum of twenty five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal share. It can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

Section IV: Proposal and Submission Information

No Federal Applications: Do not submit a full federal grant application in response to this RFIP. If your proposal is selected for funding, a federal project officer will request an application from you, negotiate the work plan and budget and oversee the process of awarding the cooperative agreement.

Proposal Elements: The proposal shall contain the following elements:

1. Name, address, contact information of the applicant.
2. Clear, concise narrative of the applicant's qualifications and preliminary proposal of activities and approaches to address needs stated in this RFIP. Resumes, letters and support, etc. may also be included.
3. Responses to each evaluation criteria (*see Section V: Application Review Information of this RFIP*)

Length of Proposal: Proposals shall not exceed twelve pages. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the proposal should be submitted on 8 x 11 ½ paper. Note that the twelve pages must include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support. If you submit more than twelve pages, the additional pages will be discarded and not considered in the review.

Proposal Requirements: Proposals must be in support of Section 117 (g) 2(B). Proposals submitted in response to this request should include the following details:

Background

- Brief description of your organization.

- Documentation of non-profit status.
- Description of how this project fits with organization's mission and how the organization would incorporate the CBP mission into the project.
- Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curricula vitae.
- Description of subaward management team (describe the members, their specialties, and what part of the subaward program for which they will be responsible). Attach resumes and/or curricula vitae.
- Description of organization's past experience as a grant recipient.

Workplan for Awards

- Description of the process that would be used to manage subaward process (including application process for subgrantees, procedures for announcement of subgrantee selection, organization of review panel, process for conducting technical reviews, time line, allowable costs and evaluation of subawards).
- Description of how EPA, other Bay Program signatories, and other CBP partners would be involved in the process, and how the small watershed grants program would contribute to the CBP mission.
- Description of the reporting mechanisms that would be used to track and report on progress associated with subawards. Include description of accountability measures (goals/objectives), how the organization plans on defining success at the end of the project, and the final report that would be provided to EPA.

Budget: Cooperative agreements to support this objective may be provided annually for up to five years. The proposal should provide a detailed budget and work plan for the first year, and a brief discussion of work to be done in the following four years. The proposal should also include the amount of funding that the applicant would expect to distribute to the subawards. Detailed work plans will be requested before providing additional funding in following years.

Mailing Information: Four unbound copies of each proposal should be mailed or delivered to:

Kim Scalia (3CB00)
U.S. EPA Region 3
Chesapeake Bay Program Office
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Deadline For Proposals: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will consider all proposals which are postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service, hand delivered, or includes official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service on or before 5:00 EST on **April 22, 2004**. All proposals postmarked or hand-delivered after the due date will not be considered for funding. No proposals will be accepted by facsimile machine submission or electronic mail.

Funding Restrictions/Administrative Cap Worksheet: Under statutory authority, grantees applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements must adhere to the requirement in the Clean Water Act, Section 117 - "Administrative Costs". This section requires a 10 percent cap for administrative costs. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent cap for administrative costs is located in Attachment 9 in "Grant Guidance: U.S. EPA CBPO Grant Guidance" which is located at <http://www.epa.gov/r3chespk/grants.htm>.

Funding Decisions: Applicants will be notified of funding decisions **by May 25, 2004**. The selected applicant will then be asked to submit a full federal grant application package available at the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/region3/grants/index.htm>.

A Federal project officer provides assistance in the application process, and negotiates a workplan, budget, and starting date. Processing of the grant award generally takes 60-90 days. The actual date for grant awards and funding availability depends upon Congressional and EPA decisions in approving budgets and releasing funds.

Additional Grant Information: Additional questions about grant issues such as cost or eligibility can be obtained on the following websites: www.epa.gov/ogd or <http://www.epa.gov/r3chespk/grants.htm> for EPA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance. Specific questions can also be addressed by contacting the EPA (*see Section IV: Agency Contact(s)*).

Important Dates:

February 26, 2004	Issuance of RFIP. Notices about updates or revisions to the RFIP and questions answers will be posted on the U.S. EPA Region 3 Chesapeake Bay Program Office website at http://www.epa.gov/r3chespk/grants.htm
April 22, 2004	Deadline for postmark of proposals 5:00 p.m. EST
April 26-May 14, 2004	Proposal review by review team
May 17, 2004	Team submits recommendation to the Office Director for decision.
May 25, 2004	EPA notifies applicants of results.
June 8, 2004	Applicant submits federal grant application. Processing of grant typically takes 60 days.
August 10, 2004	Approximate date for grant award.

Section V: Proposal Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria: The following evaluation criteria will be employed when reviewing and screening applications. A section including how each one of these will be fulfilled must be included in the proposal.

Organizational Capability: To what degree does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant has the organizational capacity, experience, travel capabilities and technical and outreach expertise to accomplish the proposed plan of work and is likely to be successful? **Maximum Score: 10 points**

Watershed and Ecosystem Knowledge: **(Check format of paragraph here)** To what degree does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant has expertise in watershed planning, watershed management and knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem? To what degree does the proposal demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of the specific challenges and issues faced in the Chesapeake Bay restoration? To what degree does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant has expertise in stormwater management, low-impact development, stormwater management and other innovative watershed management techniques? **Maximum Score: 15 points**

Specific Task Requirements: To what degree does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant can perform the task requirements of this RFIP including the ability to: 1) administer the Small Watershed Grants Program, including issuing the RFP, establishing guidelines for the program, and coordinating the review and selection of the grantees with various federal and state partners; 2) Present workshops in at least six geographic locations to advertise the program and assist potential applicants; 3) Measure environmental results and successes of the various watershed management approaches and compile this data and information and communicate it to the CBP and its partners, 4) Disperse monies to subawardees in a timely manner; and 5) Conduct outreach programs for the SWG program, including a yearly event to announce the winners and other programs to promote the successes of the SWG program. **Maximum Score: 25 points**

Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results: To what degree does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant is able to effectively measure environmental results and the successes of the various watershed management approaches, and to compile this data and information and communicate it to the CBP and its partners, particularly the states? To what degree does the proposal demonstrate the applicant's ability to manage, disperse and track over possibly three hundred subawards? **Maximum score: 15 points.**

Working with Stakeholders: To what degree does the proposal demonstrate the applicant's ability to assist and work with watershed organizations, local governments, and other stakeholders together to create effective, long-term commitment to actions as a result of receiving a Small Watershed Grant? To what degree does the proposal

demonstrate the applicant's ability to promote the Small Watershed Grants throughout the Bay watershed? **Maximum score: 20 points.**

Cost Effectiveness: To what degree is the proposal cost effective, considering the following factors: organizational overhead (indirect costs); ability to perform the duties within the operational range of budgets provided by the Chesapeake Bay Program; and ability to leverage Chesapeake Bay Program funds through matching funds, cost sharing opportunities beyond the minimum match requirements, and other partnering arrangements. **Maximum score: 15 points.**

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposal Screening: The EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office will screen proposals to ensure that they meet all requirements of this announcement. If a proposal is found to be incomplete, or if the applicant is ineligible for a federal grant, the proposal will be returned to the applicant without further consideration.

Review Panel: The Chesapeake Bay Program Office will conduct a merit evaluation of each complete proposal from an eligible applicant. All proposals will be reviewed by an independent review plan assembled by EPA.

Final Review: After proposals have been evaluated and ranked, the review team will forward the proposals to the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office Director for a final decision. As the organization responsible for allocation and obligation of funds, negotiation of final work plans, and the execution of fiscal obligations, EPA will make the final decisions on funding.

Section VI: Award Administration Information

If your proposal is selected: the following information will be helpful in preparing your grant application:

Funding: EPA has determined that a cooperative agreement is the appropriate funding vehicle for this project. Cooperative agreements are used under circumstances where EPA anticipates substantial Federal government involvement with the recipient. Typically Federal involvement would be in the form of participation with other Chesapeake Bay Program partners in an advisory committee to the grantee.

Allowable Costs: EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for cost sharing for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87 "Cost Principles for State, Local and Tribal Governments; A-122 "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations;

and A-21 “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.” Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

Incurred Costs: Costs eligible for federal grant funding cannot be incurred prior to the effective date of the cooperative agreement between the applicant and EPA. Funding eligibility ends on the date specified in the award. The time expended and costs incurred in either the development of the proposal or the final assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to the award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the recipient's cost share.

DUNS Requirement: A new requirement (policy directive) from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for grant applicants took effect on October 1, 2003 which requires grant applicants to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. A DUNS number must be included in every application (electronic or paper). The DUNS number must be included in Block 5 of the Standard Form 424 entitled, "Application for Federal Assistance" (Rev. 9-03) Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711. Additional information on obtaining a DUNS number can also be found at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/duns_num_guide.pdf.

Federal Requirements: An applicant whose proposal is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10), as well as the Administrative Cap Worksheet (see US EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance). EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award.

Intergovernmental Review: Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This program is eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”. If the applicant’s state has selected the program for review, the applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

Dispute Resolution Process: Procedures at 40 CFR 30.63 and 40 CFR 31.70 subpart F applies.

Confidential Business Information: Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their proposal that they consider confidential business information. EPA reserves the right to make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the proposals when EPA receives it, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant.

Deliverables: Awarded applicants will be required to provide a chart of deliverables, providing items and dates due.

Reporting Requirements: Semi-annual progress reports will be required as a condition of this award. An annual report which identifies the subgrants awarded and environmental results achieved is also required.

Section VII: Agency Contact(s)

For information on the programmatic content on this RFIP, please contact Theresa Martella at martella.theresa@epa.gov or Carin Bisland at bisland.carin@epa.gov. For administrative issues, please contact Kim Scalia at scalia.kim@epa.gov. All inquiries should be sent by electronic mail and all questions and answers will be posted on <http://www.epa.gov/r3chespk/grants.htm>.